

## The advanced basic kitchen

[http://www.familycorner.com/family/food/inthekitchen/advanced\\_basic\\_kitchen.shtml](http://www.familycorner.com/family/food/inthekitchen/advanced_basic_kitchen.shtml)

The following are items that you and your kitchen might be able to get by without, but life in the kitchen would be much easier if you had them. You probably already have many of the items on this list. As you get more and more into cooking, you will most likely find yourself adding these items (along with those from the next list) slowly.

- ❑ **vegetable peeler** - makes peeling things like potatoes, carrots, ginger and apples much easier.
- ❑ **food processor** - this is one of those item that you can "technically" do without, but why would you want to. A food processor makes so many kitchen jobs a snap you'll wonder how you ever did without one. Chopping onions? No problem, it takes seconds in a food processor. Want to make you're own bread or pizza? The dough's a snap with one of these handy gadgets. Need to chop nuts or chocolate? No problem. You get the picture.
- ❑ **citrus zester** - this is one of the handiest gadgets I've found in years. I used to use a greater, which was slow, difficult (and often painful as I'd inevitably grate some skin too). The citrus zester allows you to get only the zest (outer most layer of citrus skin, without the bitter white part) with little effort and no chance of grating skin along with it. Citrus zest can add wonderful flavors to many dishes, this gadget will help you get those flavors quickly and easily. citrus juicer - the taste of fresh lemon, lime or orange juices will add so much more flavor to your recipes than bottled or frozen juices can. Citrus juicers can be plain hand held models, or electric. Both will work well.
- ❑ **heavy duty mixer** - while you can get by with a hand mixer, the electric mixer will do more heavy duty jobs (good ones even have bread hooks for making doughs), free up your hands to do other tasks while food is mixing, and generally make your life in the kitchen easier. Kitchen-Aid makes a great one!
- ❑ **oven (baking) stone** - if you plan to make pizzas or bread, the oven stone is wonderful accessory that will help your recipes come out as good as professional bakeries (I said it would help, not guarantee this). The stone can sit in your oven, whether you're using it or not, so space shouldn't be a consideration. How it works is the stone holds heat, making a better (and hotter) baking surface for the dough.

- ❑ **tart pan(s)** - large tart pans have a separate bottom that sets into the side portion. The smaller tartlet pans, made for individual servings, are one piece. Both types of tart pans have fluted edges. These are necessary, of course, only if you plan on making tarts.
- ❑ **cake decorating kit** - invaluable for decorating cakes, cooking or other desserts, as well as making all kinds of food look more spectacular (think piped mashed potatoes around the roast). We've designed a kit that has everything you'll need to make beautiful creations for years to come. Click here for more details.
- ❑ **very large stock pot** - great for making large batches of soups, stews or chili for parties or to freeze. This pot also makes it easy to make large batches of stock which can be frozen for use in cooking later.
- ❑ **kitchen timer** - this should almost be on the absolute essentials list. You can get by without it by keeping your eye on the clock, but if you get a phone call or are otherwise distracted, you'll have burnt food. This inexpensive gadget is worth its weight in gold.
- ❑ **pastry blender** - if you plan on making pie doughs, this gadget which helps to cut in butter or shortening will make your life easier.
- ❑ **pastry scraper** - a large flat blade with wooden handle, this tool is great for scraping dough off work surfaces, lifting cookies, biscuits etc. onto baking sheets and helps in kneading.
- ❑ **whisk** - multi use tool for mixing and aerating batters, eggs and all kinds of things
- ❑ **candy thermometer** - if you want to get into making desserts, you'll find this to be a necessary item
- ❑ **meat thermometer** - a more accurate gauge of doneness for roasts and turkeys than timing. This gadget can also check your oven temperature for accuracy.
- ❑ **small wooden skewers** - these disposable wooden skewers come in handy, not only for making shish-kebabs (their intended use) but also for testing cakes for doneness.
- ❑ **soufflé cups** - a set of small soufflé cups will come in handy, not only for making soufflés (there are all kinds of soufflés, they're not as hard to make as

people would have you believe and are a sure fire way to impress your dinner guests) but also for handy small bowls to keep pre-measured ingredients in while you are cooking. Ikea carries a set of four small soufflé dishes for about \$15.00.

- ❑ **cleaver** - a versatile tool for cutting meats (why pay for expensive chicken parts, when you can do the cutting yourself). You can also use the cleaver to scrape dough boards and use the flat side to tenderize meat.
- ❑ **pastry brush(es)** - this is almost an essential. Use the pastry brush to brush melted butter onto bread for garlic bread, to brush bread and pie crusts with milk, egg whites, butter or water, apply barbecue sauce to food and many other uses.
- ❑ **mortar and pestle** - great for crushing spices such as peppercorns, also works well for making guacamole and salsas.
- ❑ **coffee grinder(s)** - electric coffee grinders are, of course, wonderful for grinding whole coffee beans for your morning beverage, but you might want to get a second one for grinding spices (whole peppercorns, sesame seeds, etc.). You won't want to use the same grinder for coffee as you do for spices, because the flavors of both are strong and you won't want them mixing.

Be sure to also check out:

#### **The Basic Kitchen**

<http://www.thefamilycorner.com/cgi-bin/dir/jump.cgi?ID=3161>

#### **The Basic Pantry**

<http://www.thefamilycorner.com/cgi-bin/dir/jump.cgi?ID=3253>

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